



**Betsy Gara**  
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**Connecticut Council of Small Towns**  
**Before the Labor and Public Employees Committee**  
**March 8, 2022**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in **opposition** to **SB-321 - AN ACT EXPANDING WORKERS' COMPENSATION COVERAGE FOR POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS INJURIES FOR ALL EMPLOYEES.**

Connecticut's small towns and cities have tremendous respect and appreciation for their municipal employees. Public Act 19-17, which was adopted after considerable discussion among the parties as a compromise measure, allowed police officers, parole officers, and firefighters to receive certain workers' compensation benefits for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) caused by their participation in certain "qualifying events."

Despite concerns that expanding workers' compensation coverage under these circumstances would place a heavy burden on our towns and local property taxpayers, the Connecticut General Assembly adopted Public Act 21-107 which further expands eligibility for workers' compensation benefits for post-traumatic stress injuries (PTSI) to cover (1) emergency medical services (EMS) personnel; (2) all Department of Correction (DOC) employees; (3) telecommunicators (i.e., 9-1-1 emergency dispatchers); and (4) under certain circumstances related to COVID-19, health care providers.

According to the Office of Fiscal Analysis (OFA) in analyzing similar proposals in previous years, the cost to municipalities will be highly variable depending on the number and severity of the claims filed and will result in increases in premium costs and a wide range of potential per claim costs. The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

Unfortunately, the costs of this unfunded mandate will be borne by already overburdened property taxpayers throughout the state. Towns are already concerned about how inflation will impact local budgets and property taxes. Lawmakers should reject efforts to impose new or expanded unfunded mandates on municipalities which put considerable pressure on local property taxpayers.

COST urges lawmakers to oppose this bill.

Thank you for your consideration.